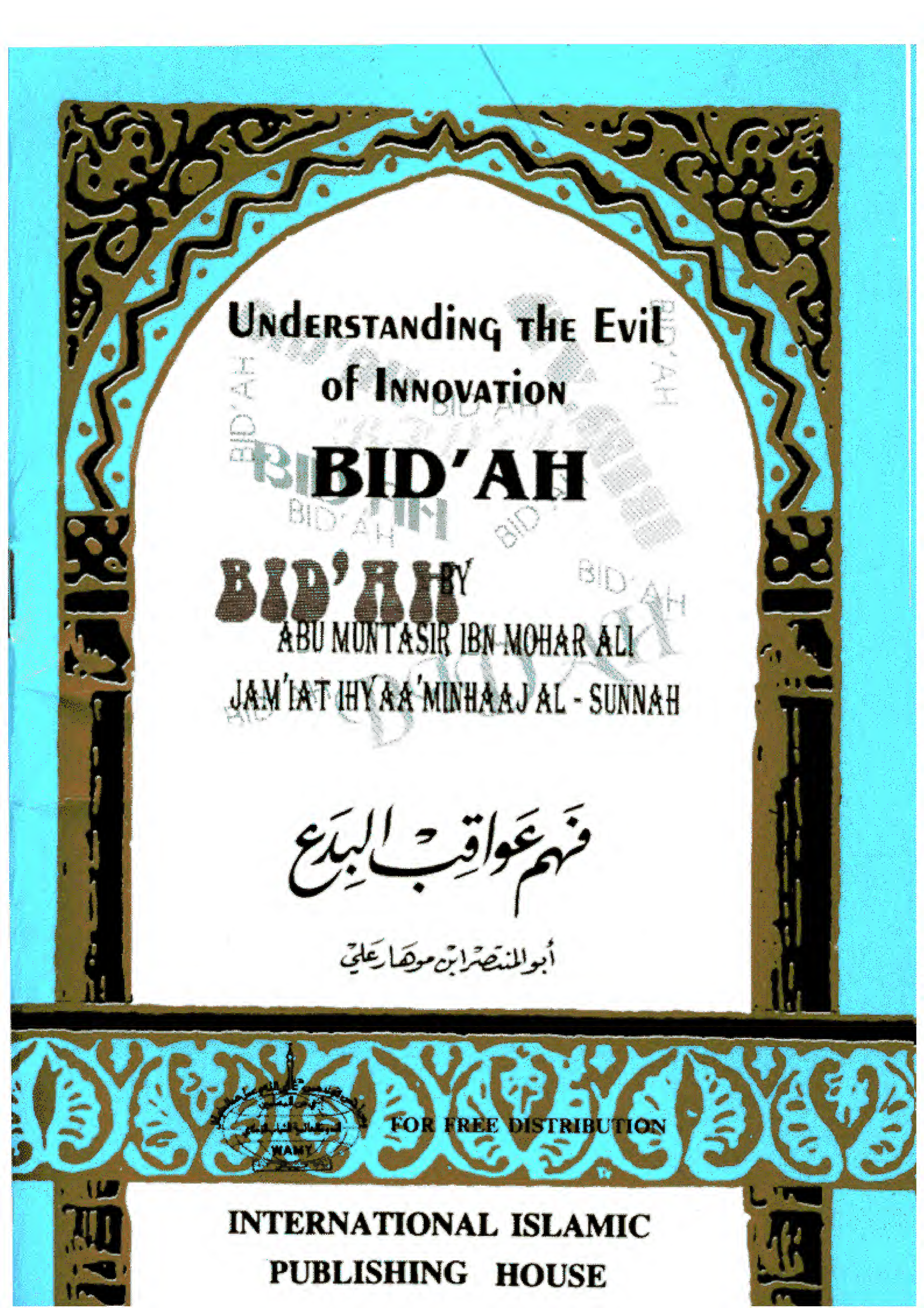


Understanding the Evil of Innovation

BID'AH

BY

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THE DEEN OF ISLAAM IS COMPLETE AND PERFECT

Allaah ta'ala has informed us that He has perfected the Deen (religion: way of life) for us, and as such there is no need for any additions or deletions to or from Islaam: "*This day have those who reject faith given up all hope of your religion: yet do not fear them but fear Me. This Day have I perfected your Deen for you, completed My Favours upon you and have chosen for you Islaam as your Deen*" (soorah Al-Maa'idah 5:4)

Understanding this aayah (verse) is vital to all combat against innovations and sticking to the revealed way. It is failure to appreciate the import of this aayah that enables a sincere person to succumb to innovating and innovations and it is imperative that a Muslim who cares about saving himself from the Fire does not labour under any misconceptions regarding it.

The famous tafseer (exegesis) of Ibn Katheer quite clearly explains that in the completion and perfection of the Deen lies the greatest blessing which Allaah ta'ala has bestowed upon the Muslim Ummah (nation). After this there no longer remains any need for a new way, nor of a new Prophet, but all that is Halaal (allowed by Allaah) has been made Halaal and all that is Haraam (forbidden by Allaah) has been made Haraam. The Deen (way of life) contains no falsehood and all we are informed of is correct and true, its orders and prohibitions are fair and accepting the Deen is one's life makes Allaah be pleased with us and that He loves the Deen (as it is preserved in the Qur'aan and the

Sunnah). Thus the above aayah was revealed so we may be grateful to Allaah and not deviate, having the full satisfaction of possessing the complete manner and the absolutely perfect way to worship Allaah.

This aayah was revealed on the Day of Arafah and no Halaal and Haraam was revealed after it till our Messenger (ﷺ) passed away, which was according to the Tafseer of Ibn Jareer eighty-one days after it. When this aayah was revealed, Umar wept, so the Messenger (ﷺ) said to him, "*What makes you weep?*" He said, "*I wept since we used to be in receipt of increase in our Deen, however, if it is completed, then that which is complete can only decrease (thereafter).*" So he (ﷺ) said, "*You have spoken truthfully.*"

Umar understood that if the revelation has ceased concerning recommendation, command and prohibition pertaining to worshipping Him, then the Messenger (ﷺ) was soon to leave this world, and how true he was in observing that only decrease in guidance can take place is borne out by the fulfilment of the Hadeeth where the Messenger (ﷺ) informed us, "*Verily Islaam began as a stranger and will return as a stranger - therefore give glad tidings to the strangers.*"

Now it has become a struggle to practice the Sunnah since it is looked upon by the vast majority to be an oddity at best and on the other scale something to be covered up for the sake of practice as established by a particular school of thought. Reinforcing the Sunnah is taken as an affront to civilisation and the culture of the Muslims, and the one blindly following his mentor resents it as an attack upon

his "religion"! Innovations have lodged itself so strongly that countering them with the Sunnah is widely hated and deplorable terms are coined to label those who in their humble ways try to revive the way of the Messenger (ﷺ) so their efforts can be rendered ineffective, but the sublime way of the Messenger (ﷺ) cannot be dimmed by their transparent lies.

The people and their favourite condescending "scholars" have simply not cared to do justice to this aayah. Even the accursed Jews recognised the significance of this aayah and thus approached Umar and exclaimed, as occurs in Bukhaaree, "*You read a verse which if it had been revealed to us we would have taken it as an 'Eid (a public holiday for celebrations).*" So Umar said, "*I know when it was revealed and where it was revealed and where the Messenger (ﷺ) was when it was revealed: The Day of Arafah - and by Allaah I was at Arafah.*" In a similar narration in Musnad Ahmad, Umar further states that it was in the evening of Arafah being the Day of Jumu'ah. Alee said, "*This aayah was revealed to the Messenger (ﷺ) while he was standing in the evening (between Asr and Maghrib) of Arafah.*" (reported by Ibn Mardawaih)

Don't you see? The Companions knew the exact time and place of the revelation of the aayah which favoured them with the assurance and approval of Allaah of having the complete and perfect Deen, a favour from the Lord of the worlds which is enviable to the extreme for a nation, a fact to give rise to justified hope and exuberant joy in the hearts and minds of people of that nation, yet, for all that it constituted and all the above and more so that even the

wretched Jews recognised and envied it, the Companions did not innovate and do anything special to commemorate this great honour. Doing so would have made them violate the very truth of this aayah and would have been an act so perverse as to make them do something tantamount to denying the verse and give precedence to their own desires, something which the noble Companions were very far from ever doing at any time unlike so many of us today.

Islaam covers every aspect of life and the Deen has not left us in the dark in any of our affairs. That it also teaches us how to fulfil every department of life is acknowledged by every Muslim except he who is absolutely uneducated and wishes to have it his own way. The person who does not want to follow his vain desires but seeks to be ennobled by the Sunnah which nurtures and brings out the very best of being human does not but crave to practice the Sunnah, and this Sunnah teaches us even the way to relieve ourselves from the call of nature, the way to go to sleep and awake, the way to bathe and dress, the way to procreate, in fact everything, Alhamdulillaah. Every matter has been left with clear instructions as to what is permitted or prohibited in them and again, the malevolent Jews recognised this too, and taunted the believers with their sneering statements and questions about what they thought were belittling aspects of the Deen of Islaam. Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Zayd related that the Jews said to Salmaan al-Faarsee: "*Your Prophet teaches you everything , even how to relieve yourselves.*" Salmaan said: "*Certainly! He forbade us from facing the qibla whilst doing so...*" (Saheeh - narrated by Muslim, Aboo Daawood and at-Tirmidhee)

Nowadays, if such an encounter were to take place it is doubtful if the general Muslim would respond with such clear cut conviction and pride, rather one would find he would be more likely to struggle for finding an acceptable answer to what he would thick were embarrassing aspects of his religion that this infidel 'cleverly' spotted and mocked at, fumbling for apologetics and thus confirming himself to be even a greater fool than the jeerer. It is this inferiority complex which erodes into our defences against evil by not giving the Sunnah its rightful place and consequently leaving the heart open for accommodation of innovations and consequently straying from the Allaah given way.

There is nothing left for us to do except follow what has been shown to us by the practices of the Messenger (ﷺ) and his Companions. The Messenger (ﷺ) has fulfilled his mission faithfully and told us all we need to know for keeping to the Straight Path leading to Paradise and obtaining the pleasure of Allaah, and it is not possible that a Muslim can think that he can improve upon the knowledge that Allaah gave Muhammad (ﷺ). Abdullah ibn Amr reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "*It was the duty of every Prophet Allaah sent to guide his nation to the best of what he knew and to warn them of the evils of what he knew.*" (Saheeh - narrated by Imaam Muslim) The Messenger (ﷺ) also said: "*I have not left anything which Allaah ordered you except that I have ordered you with it, nor anything that Allaah forbade you except that I forbade you from it.*" (Saheeh - narrated by al-Baihaqee (7:76))

Thus this aayah is perhaps the greatest proof against the innovators and it is imperative that a Muslim understands the full import of the above aayah and challenges the innovators and those who fall into it with the understanding of it. In doing so he will do both himself and the others a favour and help in building the real imaan (faith) because real imaan cannot be established on false and evil premises and practices.

OBEDIENCE TO THE REVEALED WAY

It is obvious that the greater the information concerning the right conduct of worshipping Allaah the more we are liable to maintain our practice of the Deen given to us by Allaah. Imaan and action go hand in hand and support each other to become stronger. Hence if we are to foster greater imaan we have to take recourse to doing only what is laid down in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. This will always ensure fulfilment of our purpose of being created and stop us from getting deflected from the Straight Path. Thus Allaah subhaanahu wa ta'ala enjoins on us the obedience to His Messenger (ﷺ) and that we accept all that he shows us of ebaadah (worship) and Deen. As Allaah ta'ala says: "*And take what the Messenger gives you and refrain from what he forbids you.*" (soorah al-Hashr 59: 7) This aayah is a proof of the obligation to accept the authentic Sunnah in all the affairs and this fact is lucidly attested to by the following narration. Maroeq said, "*A woman came to Ibn Mas'ood and said, 'I have heard that you forbid tattooing and the use of false hair - is that something you have found in the Book of Allaah ta'ala or from the Messenger (ﷺ)?' He said, 'Rather it is something which I have found in the Book of Allah and from the Messenger (ﷺ).' She said, 'By Allaah I have read the mushaf from cover to cover and I have not found in it what you say.' He said, 'Did you not find in it, "And take what the Messenger gives you and refrain from what he forbids you?" She said, 'Yes'. He said, 'Certainly I have heard the Messenger (ﷺ) forbid the use of false hair, tattooing and plucking out facial hair.' She said, 'Perhaps it is present in some of your family?' He said, 'Then enter and look.' So*

she entered and looked - then left. She said, 'I did not see anything (objectionable).' So he said to her, 'Have you not memorised the testament of the righteous servant "I do not wish to do in opposition to you concerning what I forbid you to do." ' " (reported by Ibn Abi Haatim and quoted by Ibn Katheer in his tafseer) This true story is narrated in Bukhaaree, Muslim and in the Musnad of Ahmad too.

In making it obligatory for us to follow the Messenger (ﷺ) He has made it forbidden for us to innovate in the matters of the Deen. Muslims are expected to strive in attaching oneself firmly as possible to the way of the Messenger (ﷺ) and thus keep away from the way of those who are deprived of guidance and establish their own modes of worship. In both Saheeh Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim it has come to us from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger (ﷺ) said, "*When I order you with something, then do as much of it as you can, and when I forbid you from something, then avoid it.*"

Raaf'i ibn Khadeej reported that "*The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) came to Madeenah and found the people fertilising the date-palm trees. He said: 'What are you doing?' They said: 'We are fertilising the trees.' Whereupon he said: 'Maybe it would be better for you if you were not to do that.' So they abandoned the practice and their harvest decreased. They made mention of that to (the Prophet) whereupon he said: 'I am a human being, so if I command you about something which pertains to your Deen, accept it and if I command you about something from my own raa'y (then bear in mind) I am a human being.'* " (Saheeh - narrated by Muslim)

The point is Muslims have decided who it is they are going to admire the most and believe to be the best example to follow. If they are looking for someone who can be the best in worshipping Allaah with the greatest and highest knowledge then can it be anyone other than our very Messenger (ﷺ) himself? In reality Allaah Himself tells us that if we need to take someone as an example to imitate, a paragon whose qualities and behaviour is to be desired and adhered to, then it is Muhammad (ﷺ) "*You have indeed in the Messenger of Allaah a beautiful pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allaah and the Last Day.*" (soorah Al-Ahzaab 33: 21) Who can be a greater fool and further astray than one who fails to accept he whom Allaah Himself recommends to be obeyed and copied? A Muslim who hopes for success in the Hereafter cannot go away from the mores and means of the Messenger (ﷺ) and allow himself to participate in innovations let alone cook up a novelty in worship. By positively directing us to the true model to aspire after, Allaah ta'ala helps us against surrendering to the deceptions of Shaitaan by effectively shutting off the doors to innovations.

Innovating is definitely sinful and he who doubts it is nothing but piteously ignorant. As we shall see in the summary, those who indulge in it tread a very dangerous path since he more or less shuts himself away from having his other sins forgiven. No man or group can deserve so much from you that you can choose to go to Hell for them. There are many things in Islaam which we have been forbidden to do which if committed can wipe out many or all of our good deeds, and one of them is doing acts in disobedience to Allaah and His Messenger (ﷺ). We live to

store up as much goodness on our side as we can by His grace, so that the scale of righteousness will be heavy in our favour on the Day of Judgement. Which individual in the sanity of his mind will throw away what he has been acquiring by doing such deeds as cancels his good actions? Does he think he has enough time left on this earth to make up for his losses? Allaah informs: "*O you who believe! Obey Allaah and obey the Messenger and do not make your deeds baatil (null and void).*" (soorah Muhammad 47: 33)

The Companions in the beginning understood that after saying "Laa ilaaha illallaah" then so sin would be of harm and Ibn Umar said: "*We the Companions of the Messenger (ﷺ) used to think that all good deeds will be accepted until this aayah was revealed, so we said, 'What is that which nullifies the deeds?'* " (Ibn Katheer) So it is clear that if we are confronted with practices to be carried out in the name of getting reward from Allaah as part of our worshipping Him, then it is rather important that we do not act until we have verified that the act is sanctioned by the Sunnah or can be seen to have been done by the Companions upon their understanding a specified text in the Qur'aan or Hadeeth. Time is very precious and each one of us are relentlessly going forward to the end of our period on the earth, thus it must be our concern that our actions are going to be accepted by Allaah and not wasted, not to speak of actually destroying the good deeds! Imaam Sufyan ath-Thauree said, "*No word is accepted without action and no word and action are correct without intention, and no word, action and intention are correct unless they in accordance with the Sunnah.*" So what do you now think of

these innovators and those who follow them? Ayyoob as-Sakhtiyaanee used to say, "*No innovator works harder (in worship etc.) except that he increases in distance away from Allaah.*"

Innovations by definition do not have any link with either the Messenger (ﷺ) or his time, and clearly beckons to misguidance and the Fire. This was the understanding of the illustrious scholars of the past, fro example we have Imaam Zuhree approving of the attitude of Imaam Maalik and saying, "*Clinging to the Sunnah is to be saved as Maalik said, 'Like the Ark of Noah', he who embarked was saved and he who did not was destroyed.*" The only guaranteed way to remain guided is to uncompromisingly stick to the Qur'aan and the Sunnah, even though the majority may be averse to it. The Messenger (ﷺ) said: "*I am leaving you two things and you will never go astray as long as you hold fast to them. The Book of Allaah and my Sunnah.*" (Saheeh - narrated by al-Haakim and also by Maalik in mursal form)

ALL INNOVATIONS IN THE DEEN STRICTLY FORBIDDEN

The forbiddance of innovations can clearly be found in the following aayah where Allaah has ordered the Muslims to follow and accept as Deen only that which has been revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah and where all forms of worship needed and approved of have been sanctioned, and any other procedure or norm has been outlawed. "*Follow that which has been revealed to you from your Lord and do not follow as awliyaa other than Him.*" (soorah Al-A'raaf 7: 3) This aayah is categorical in forbidding taking into consideration anyone who originates new matters in the field of worshipping Allaah because the right and the privilege to inform how to worship Allaah belongs to no one but Himself. Someone who comes along and institutes a new matter in the Deen assumes for himself the prerogative that belongs solely to Allaah and claims by his behaviour as if Allaah includes that act in His revelation. The innovators thus attribute lies to Allaah and instead of facilitating the Deen for the people, on the contrary turn them away from Allaah!

Aa'isha reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "*Whoever introduces into this affair of ours something that we have not commanded it is to be rejected.*" (Saheeh - narrated by al-Buhkaaree and Muslim) Rejected by whom, one may ask. Quite obviously, rejected by Allaah, His Messenger (ﷺ) and the Muslim when he becomes aware that it cannot be backed up by the Qur'aan or the Sunnah. It is very strange and the price we are paying for it is very high in terms of confusion, contention and obscuring of the clear

way, that one becomes knowledgeable of the correct practice but still insist on carrying on in the unjustified way - stop and ask them, since when did they think they could play pretender-prophets for the people? The innovators not only squander away their own time and resources in their futile sinful innovations but drag others into doing the same and richly deserve our censure and contempt. If we had faith in the Almighty and trusted what we have been asked to do, we could have never tolerated the presence of innovations in the society. There is no way that an innovation will suddenly become sanctified and admissible to Allaah. The Messenger (ﷺ) said: "*Whoever does an action that we have not commanded, it will be rejected.*" (Saheeh - narrated by Imaam Muslim) Imaam Nawawee, as mentioned by ash-Shaukaanee in Nayl-ul-Awtaar, exhorts that this Hadeeth be mesmerised and used in counteracting the evils (munkarat) and making them baatil (obsolete).

Jaabir reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "*To proceed with: The best Hadeeth (speech) is the Book of Allaah and the best guidance and example is that of Muhammad. And the worst of all things are the newly invented things, for every innovation is error and misguidance.*" (Saheeh - narrated by Muslim), and in another narration. . . "*every newly invented matter is bid'ah and every bid'ah is dalaalah (going astray) and every dalaalah is in the Fire.*" (Saheeh - narrated by at-Tirmidhee) So the proof is right there under our very noses that there is no such thing as a good bid'ah, the popularly known bid'ah Hasanah. Bid'ah in itself is an error which leads to the Fire and is defined by the Messenger (ﷺ) to be the worst thing that one can

do, how can that be good in any form or place? Unless these vile innovators want to seduce the people by making the ridiculous distinction between a good way and a bad way of entering Hell, as if there were any such matter as a good error in the practice of the Deen in reality.

The Companions and the great scholars of the past from among our pious predecessors never come near to innovation with knowledge and have unequivocally advised against taking this destructive loathsome route. Hudhayfah ibn al-Yamaan said: "*Every act of worship that the Companions of Messenger (ﷺ) did not do, do not do them.*" (Saheeh - narrated by Aboo Daawood) Ibn Mas'ood said: "*Make 'ittibaa (imitate and follow) and do not do bid'ah for what you have been commanded is enough for you.*" (Saheeh - narrated by ad-Daarimee) This was the attitude of the Companions but now look at the Muslims of today. Naturally we have less knowledge than the first generations and none of us can ever compete with any one of them in piety and devotional works. In this situation is it not reasonable to say that if they chose to be so careful in sticking to what they had been taught by the Messenger (ﷺ) we should be even more so? After all, if with their knowledge they did not feel secure in innovating, by virtue of what special knowledge do the Muslims of today so freely pander to novelties in the Deen? If the faith of the early generation could not permit innovations isn't that the sort of faith we need to cultivate? But there will always be the few who would think they are wiser than the Companions and they are the meanest of the dregs of mankind.

Ibn al-Jawzee quotes in his book Talbees Iblees the Imaam al-Awzaa'ee who said, "*Patiently restrict yourself to the Sunnah and do not go beyond the positions held by the Sahaabah (the Companions); hold their position and avoid what they avoided. Take the path of the Salaf us-Saaliheen (the Companions and the pious predecessors in the way of the Companions), for verily what was sufficient for them is sufficient for you.*" Let no one step into the shoes of Muhammad (ﷺ) as it were and change the Deen that was established through him by Allaah. The innovators dismantle the Deen piece by piece until the hearts and minds of the people are left corrupted and polluted so they are no longer able to recognise the Truth apart from falsehood. They are like a cancer which slowly eats up the body from within.

We know this from the statement of the famous taabi'ee (successor) Hassan Ibn Atiyyah who said that "*No people introduced an innovation into their religion except that an equivalent Sunnah is taken away from them.*" (reported by ad-Daarimee with Saheeh isnaad) the innovators and those who encourage them by participating in their foul deeds are guilty of attempting to annihilate the Deen because they are the demolishers of the religion. They are the demolishers because they seek to pervert the Deen by making it a way of misguidance. Ibn Umar said, "*Every innovation is misguidance even if the people regard it to be something good.*" (reported by ad-Daarimee with Saheeh isnaad) You have to be sick to say Islaam is self-destructive, rather Islaam does not permit anything which is not conducive to it. How can we respect these people who steep themselves in innovatory practices in the

name of Islaam and loudly profess to be the standard-bearers of the Faith? Would you seek to destroy Islaam with your own tongues and hands if you were a Muslim and feared Allaah and the Day of Judgement? Would you not fight against those who seek to distort the clear evidence and hamper the practices of Muhammad (ﷺ) and the virtuous Companions? All innovations no matter what technical terms are applied to them are forbidden in Islaam and must be uprooted Inshah Allaah.

Imaam Maalik said: "*Whatever was not Deen at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) cannot be considered to be a part of the Deen today.*" All that has preceded in this section totally refutes the idea of bid'ah Hasanah and may the Muslims not seek excuses on behalf of Shaitaan in favour of shirk (associating anything with Allaah), ameen.

SEVERE WARNING AGAINST INNOVATION

There may be knowledge present with the people and they may be very intelligent too, yet it is not difficult to find even among such persons the tendency sometimes to make little of the commands and prohibitions of Allaah and His Messenger (ﷺ), not to speak of those of us who are ignorant and have learnt very little to control their own desires. The problem is actually to do with the lack of proper understanding, where faith has not yet entered the heart and taken deep root. These people are still trying to assert their own individuality over and above the dictates in the revelation since they make too much of themselves and are puffed up with false hopes rising from a crooked appreciation of Allaah's Deen. It becomes so easy for them to neglect the Sunnah and accommodate invented ways that instead of trying to guide the straying individuals back to the clear uncompromising way they would rather accommodate the wretched inventions and shelter the innovators in the name of peace, wisdom and harmony! They have failed their own intelligence and knowledge and richly deserve all censure and punishment from Allaah. Thus Allaah subhaanahu wa ta'ala says: "*Let those beware who withstand the Rasool's orders, unless some fitnah befalls them or a grievous penalty be inflicted on them.*" (soorah An-Noor 24: 63)

The fitnah (trial) mentioned in the above aayah is explained to be kufr (disbelief), nifaq (hypocrisy) or bid'ah in their hearts, while the grievous penalty is understood to mean all forms of suffering in this world. (Ibn Katheer) Certainly when we are steeped in innovations we cannot

expect the blessings of Allaah in our actions much less Paradise in exchange as we shall shortly see, because certainly whenever we innovate we seek to alter the perspicacious course of action of the Messenger (ﷺ). It is as if by innovating we are trying to hide or obscure the one and only path leading to Paradise for the others which as can be appreciated is a monstrous thing to do. It is doing the job of Shaitaan in the guise of piety, a most effective technique to cheat the senses of the well-meaning ignorant people of the fraud involved.

Is it perhaps they have some special dispensation from Allaah whereby they are absolved from listening to certain of His commands? Otherwise how do their hearts permit them to remain calm over matters undeniably cooked-up and incorporated into the Deen as substitutes for the established way of the Sunnah? Either as a Muslim one should be pleased to know and follow the way of the Messenger (ﷺ) or one should apportion to himself the unwarranted privilege to invent his own methods and manners of worshipping Allaah. Evidently the latter way is that of the pagans, yet such a multitude continues to resist giving up old or new unjustified habits, unjustified that is from the Qur'aan and the Sunnah, that one cannot help but question the sanity or stability of their minds. What manner of Muslims are these who after knowing the truth would still prefer their own ways? Allaah says: "*If anyone contends with the Rasool even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him and follows a path other than that of the believers, We shall leave him in the path he has chosen and land him in Hell, what an evil refuge!*" (Soorah An-Nisa 4: 115)

Thus maintaining own preferences and choices in the face of guidance in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah by adhering to innovations certainly invites the wrath of Allaah whereby He makes their deeds seem good to them in their hearts and alluring to them in their minds thus bringing them closer to destruction by degrees until they have Hell as their final abode. This is the understanding we get when we read the tafseer of Ibn Katheer pertaining to this aayah. It is exactly as the Messenger (ﷺ) explained, "*My likeness amongst you is that of a man who lit a fire and when it lights up what is around it, moths and these creatures which fall into the fire begin to fall into it, and he tries to prevent them but they get the better of him and plunge into the fire: so that is my likeness amongst you. I am taking hold of you by your waists to (pull you away from) the Fire (saying) 'Come away from the Fire', but you are overcoming me and falling into it.!*" (Saheeh - narrated by Imaam Bukhaaree and Imaam Muslim from Abdur Razzaak)

It is no good giving confusion as an excuse because of the great differences that are to be found in the Ummah. The truth is one and the truth comes from the guidance of Allaah which in this case is revelation. The Messenger (ﷺ) said, "*Allaah will only unite my Ummah on guidance.*" (Saheeh - narrated by at-Tirmidhee) So if there is disunity on an affair then one should seek the truth from the evidence. The Messenger (ﷺ) has also said, "*My Ummah will never agree upon dalaalah (error).*" (Saheeh - narrated by at-Tirmidhee and al-Haakim) Maybe the truth is only with a single person? Who has the evidence? If evidence does not matter then how do you decide whose

opinion to accept? Is Islaam built on opinions? Should you accept opinions without any text for it in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah?

Either the act of worship is sanctioned by Allaah or it is not. If it is to be acceptable to Allaah it will be found either in the Qur'aan or the Sunnah, otherwise it is erroneous and nothing will make it right, ever. That difference will arise was foretold by our Messenger (ﷺ) and the sensible person in that situation will seek to do nothing but follow the example of those worthy to be followed. Who else can they be other than the Messenger (ﷺ) himself and whom he himself exhorted for us? He (ﷺ) said: "*I exhort you to fear Allaah and to hear and obey even if (the one in command) is an Abyssinian slave, and he amongst you that would survive after me would see great differences. So hold fast to my Sunnah and to the sunnah of the Khulafaa'i Raashideen al-Mahdiyeen (the four rightly guided caliphs), adhere to it and cling to it tightly and beware of innovations for every innovation is bid'ah and every bid'ah is dalaalah.*" (Saheeh - narrated by Aboo Dawood, at-Tirmidhee and Ibn Maajah)

Ibn Mas'ood narrated: "*The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) drew a line for us and then said: 'This is Allaah's Straight Path.' Then he drew lines to its right and left, then he said: 'These are (other) paths, upon every one of them there is a devil calling towards it.' Then he recited (from soorah An'aam aayah 153).*" (Saheeh - narrated by Ahmad, an-Nasaa'ee, al-Haakim and ad-Daarimee) "*Verily this is My Straight Path, so follow it and follow not (other) paths, they will separate you away from His Path. This He has*

ordained for you that you may become pious." (soorah al-An'aam 6: 153) It is thus manifest that all paths do not lead to Allaah or Paradise, a much adored but woefully mistaken notion, and the way to success in both the worlds is only one. Choosing any other way is to be deceived by the devil and we should counter the hardened innovators as nothing but agents of the Shaitaan. Ash-Shaatibee while commenting on this aayah says: *"The Straight Path is the Path of Allaah which He called to and it is the Sunnah, and the paths (the other paths) are the ways of those in disagreement who hinder from Allaah's way - and they are people of innovation. What is not meant are the ways of sin, since sins are never taken by anyone as a way to follow always in opposition to the Sharee'ah, rather this description is particularly to the newly invented innovations."*

Only one group from among the seventy odd groups will go to Paradise and the others will not do so precisely because they chose to innovate new ways for themselves. They cast aside the Sunnah and considered it better to formulate and originate novel ways of worshipping Allaah, as if they know better than the very people who surrounded the Messenger (). Abdullah ibn Amr reported that, *"The Messenger (ﷺ) said: 'Those evils which befell the Banee Israa'eel shall befall my Ummah, so much so that if there was one amongst them that openly committed fornication with his mother there would be one among my Ummah who would do that too. And the Banee Israa'eel split into seventy-two sects and my Ummah shall split into seventy-three sects. All of them will be in the Fire, except one group.' They (the Sahaabah) said: 'Which one is that*

O Messenger?' Whereupon he said: 'It is the one to which I and my Companions belong.' " (Saheeh - narrated by at-Tirmidhee) In another narration ". . . *seventy-two will be in the Fire and one in Paradise, and that is the Jama'ah.*" (Saheeh - narrated by Aboo Daawood and others)

This is the severe warning against innovation. It is nothing other than burning and boiling in Hell, so who among us who is taking the advice to save oneself from the Fire "*even it be with half a piece of date*" will be indulgent in innovations? Innovation when viewed from the context of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah find no scope to be accommodated in the least except among the crass fools.

CURBING THE TENDENCIES FOR INNOVATING

Perhaps the main reason why innovations occur, keeping to one side the innovations that take place due to the malicious nature of some of the perpetrators from among the enemies of Allaah and His Messenger (ﷺ), is the desire to please Allaah and gain rewards from Him, applied ignorantly and erroneously. Such people do not even aim at insulting the Messenger () or to put down the Sharee'ah, rather they wish to make up for their deficiencies in their worship by such acts and see them as convenient ways to acquire goodness. However, such people soon tend to fall into the disgusting behaviour where they would preferably carry on in the negative acts of innovation and keep on neglecting what is essential for them to do in the Deen as a result of not basing their faith and practice on the clear knowledge of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. Innovations become the escape hatch for them to rid themselves of their guilty conscience. Thus you will find so many so-called Muslims who are so care free regarding their five daily prayers but very particular about going to the graves of known holy people to seek their blessings! You may have a man who prays five times all right but keeps on missing Jumu'ah week after week and very strict about maintaining innovatory religious gatherings which they call meelaad.

Actually a lot of this is due to the corrupt and misguided people to whom the others turn to for knowledge in the matters of the Deen, people who see in Islaam a way to gain fame and influence and power, people who see Islaam as a business i.e., people whose purpose is to make money out of performing acts of worship, people who thrive on

sectarianism and shirk, and there are so many of them! Small wonder innovations find an easy time in the society and the general mass find it so difficult to come out of them.

The Messenger (ﷺ) said to three men who after inquiring into the worship of the Prophet said: "*Where do we stand in comparison to the Nabee (Prophet) (ﷺ) for Allaah has forgiven his past and present sins.*" One said: "*I will observe prayer all night every night.*" The other said: "*I will observe fast every day.*" The third said: "*I will keep away from women and never marry.*" However, Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said to them, "*Is it you who said such and such a thing? By Allaah! I fear Allaah the most from amongst you, but I fast and I eat, I pray and I sleep and I also marry. Whoever turns away from my Sunnah is not of me.*" (Saheeh - narrated by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim) ,

This Hadeeth clearly shows that the three people concerned did not wish to do anything bad but rather wanted to be closer to Allaah and have their sins forgiven, but the fatality of their decisions lay in the fact that they wanted to do that which is not shown by the Sunnah. They were motivated by the best of intentions yet their actions were to be so deplorable that the Messenger (ﷺ) had to explain to them that if what they wanted to do were prompted by their fear of Allaah then they should know that he (ﷺ) feared Allaah the most and they should do nothing else but follow the Sunnah which is the only way and the best way to worship Allaah whom we fear. A severe warning was then given showing that when we keep aloof from the Sunnah

and adopt our own methods we in effect detach ourselves from being part of his Ummah.

Now look at how we have become so depraved! We see so many examples quoted regarding our pious worshippers, stories undoubtedly concocted or exaggerated because our knowledgeable pious worshippers could not have flouted the Sunnah on purpose, and so many of our brothers and sisters become full of admiration for the feats mentioned in those stories, that it is of very little surprise that the values of people at large become coloured by them and distorted, with the result that the Sunnah loses its appeal against these far-fetched fabrications. For example we have some people trying to inculcate faith in the religion talking about such and such a devoted servant of Allaah perhaps praying two thousand rakaah every night and then garnish it with other tasks of ardour like doing so with a single wudhoo (ablution) from Isha till Fajr and never sleeping a wink at night while performing such exploits for forty years! The listeners gasp with sounds of amazement and esteem while the speaker then makes the most of it by expressing his delight and veneration for such accomplishments and then making everyone feel guilty for not even trying to be like such 'heroes'! Does anyone stop to ask if such was the practice of the Messenger (ﷺ), if he (ﷺ) ever taught us to appreciate Islaam and its people in such a way, whether the Companions were of such performing merits? All this nonsense works precisely because we remain ignorant of and unmoved by the teachings of the revelation by the Messenger (ﷺ) and his noble Companions.

Aa'isha reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) performed an act and gave permission for it to be done, but some people kept themselves aloof from it. This news reached the Messenger (ﷺ) and he delivered a khutbah (sermon) praising Allaah and then said: "*What is the matter with the people that they avoid doing a thing which I do. By Allaah I have the best knowledge of Allaah amongst them and I fear Him the most.*" (Saheeh - narrated by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Thus to limit the spread of innovations and contain them from becoming too profoundly embedded in the hearts and minds, and inevitably remove them, it is imperative that one turns for guidance only to the two pure sources of the Qur'aan and the authentic Hadeeth of the Messenger (ﷺ). The person should always establish as far as he is capable whether any act of devotion or prayer is evidenced in the Book and the Sunnah or not, whether it is the very act itself or the manner in which it is done, and take every detail of it into account. He needs to understand that the Messenger's (ﷺ) way is the best way and have unshakeable confidence in the practices of the Companions from the Sunnah. Therefore one has to acquire knowledge of the Deen and know that Allaah has indeed said so or the Messenger (ﷺ) has indeed said so or done so in any affair of worship.

One needs to understand that the Companions of the Messenger (ﷺ) were the best of the generations and we cannot have a better understanding of the Faith or its practice! Imaam Maalik said, "*He who innovates an innovation in Islaam regarding it as something good has claimed that Muhammad (ﷺ) has betrayed his trust to*

deliver the Message as Allaah says: 'Today have I completed your Deen.' And whatever was not part of the Deen then, is not part of the Deen today." (Al-I'tisaam of Ash-Shaatibee) This was the firm stance of one of the greatest of the scholars and we would do well to learn from such people.

Islaam came and removed all traces of Jaahiliyyah (ignorance) both from the manners of worship and from our minds, i.e., in our outlook and thoughts, alhamdulillaah. If we are to follow our own concept of what is acceptable and what is not pertaining to how to worship Allaah, then we are no better than the pagans who chose to glorify and beseech Him according to their whims. Islaam repulsed Jaahiliyyah so completely from the Deen that even the aspect of food and dress were no left untouched.

Allaah subhaanahu wa ta'ala says: "*Who has forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of Allaah which He has produced for His Servants, and the things that are tayyibaat for sustenance?*" (soorah Al-A'raaf 7:32)

It is related in the tafseer of Ibn Katheer from Abul Qaasim at-Tabraanee who ultimately takes it from Ibn Abbaas that the Quraish used to make tawaaf (circumbulation) of the Ka'bah naked, whistling and clapping, so Allaah revealed the above aayah and ordered them to wear clothes. Ibn Katheer also explains that this aayah is also a reply to those who forbid anything regarding food, drink or clothing on their own initiative without any prescription from Allaah. As can be seen in so many of the innovations

found among the people today, one is not allowed to eat or conversely recommended to eat a certain type of sweet dish on certain days or nights for getting special blessings etc. connected to rituals which are conducted in the name of Islaam for the purpose of commemorating this or that event or to honour such and such a holy man who passed away long ago. This is as a result of not fully appreciating the completeness of the Deen and it being the only permitted way to seek rewards from Him in worship.

Ibn Abbaas said: "*We would come with him (Abdullah ibn Mas'ood) to the masjid. One day Aboo Moosa al-Asharee came, looking worried and asked whether Aboo Abdur-Rahmaan (ibn Mas'ood) had come out. We said: 'No' So he also sat waiting. When Ibn Mas'ood came out he (Aboo Moosa) said: 'Just now I saw an innovation but it looks good in seeing.' Ibn Mas'ood said: 'What did you see?' Aboo Moosa said: 'I saw a group sitting in a circle waiting for us. They had pebbles in their hands. In every circle there was a man who said, 'say takbeer one-hundred times' so they said takbeer (Allaahu-akbar) one-hundred times. Then he said, 'say tahleel one-hundred times' so they said tahleel (alhamdulillaah) one-hundred times, and likewise they said tasbeeh (subhanAllaah) one-hundred times. Ibn Mas'ood said: 'Then what did you say?' Aboo Moosa said: 'I did not say anything and I waited for you.' Whilst talking both reached the masjid and observed the recitation in the manner described by Aboo Moosa. Addressing the people of one circle Ibn Mas'ood asked: 'What is going on?' They said: 'These are pebbles and on them we are reciting takbeer, tahleel and tasbeeh of Allaah.' Ibn Mas'ood said: 'Instead of this you better count*

your sins. I stand in surety that Allaah will not allow your virtues to go to waste. Alas O Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ), how soon you are spoiled. What a number of Sahaabah are still amongst you. The clothes of the Prophet () are still not worn out. The utensils he used are still intact. And so you think that you are following a way which is better than the Prophet's and gives better guidance? Are you not opening a door of deviation through this bid'ah?' The people replied apologetically: 'By Allaah our neeyah (intention) was good.' Ibn Mas'ood said: 'What a number of men there are that intend good but never reach that good.' " (narrated by ad-Daarimee in as-Sunan)

The above aathaar is very clear in proving the point that when a certain permitted way of glorifying Allaah either through words or action is performed by utilising a new style or in the setting of a new method or in the scheme of a new way of getting rewards from Allaah, then that practice is an innovation which can only bring evil let alone good. This is readily apparent from the statement of Ibn Abbaas when he said, "*Instead of this you better count your sins.*" Contrast the attitude of Ibn Abbaas with those with those of today where he says, "*And so you think that you are following a way which is better than the Prophet's and gives better guidance?*" Also note how Ibn Abbaas did not accept their having good intentions as justification for the bid'ah.

This is the core of the matter which we need to grasp and the essence of correct thinking which we need to develop, that an innovation is done only at the expense of the Sunnah arrogating it to a better way than the

Messenger's (ﷺ) and that nothing ever from anyone no matter how learned or pious he may be can be better in any way from that of the Messenger's (ﷺ) way. This sort of comprehension and outlook is what is going to build up a society where its people like the Companions and those who followed them in their way will not tolerate the slightest addition or alteration to what has come from Allaah and His Messenger (ﷺ) and the check against evil and falsehood is ensured to be dynamic and immediate. Now we can see why the ways of the Salaf were neither strict nor harsh but of wisdom which reflected the genuine concern for the well-being of the Deen in the lives of the people. Thus when once a man sneezed in the presence of Ibn Umar and said "*Praise be to Allaah and peace be upon the Rasool,*" Ibn Umar chastised the man and said: "*The Prophet has only taught us to say Alhumdulillaah.*" (narrated by at-Tirmidhee)

Innovations are the way through which the shayateen from among the jinn and the men cause the worshipper to stray from the right path and become closer to evil and more susceptible to it. It is shirk in that one takes some others to be also deifying for him something in the Deen. Ibn Katheer explains the following aayah to mean, "*That is: they do not follow the straight religion which Allaah has prescribed for you, rather they follow that which their devils from the jinns and humans stipulate for them.*"

"*What! Have they partners (with Allaah) who have established for them something in the Deen for which Allaah has given no permission for?*" (soorah Ash-Shoorah 42:21)

A Muslim must decide and do so firmly and clearly whether he wants to worship Allaah by submitting to His Will by uncompromisingly sticking to the revelation or by becoming paganistic and deviated whereby he prefers opinions and maxims of those around him with regards to his Deen. The instruction of the Messenger (ﷺ) is crystal clear regarding the innovators. Ibn Mas'ood reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "*There was never a nabee that Allaah raised amongst his Ummah before me except that he had in his Ummah some hawaaryyoon (Helpers) and Sahaabah (Companions) who held fast to his sunnah and followed his commands. They were then succeeded by a people who professed what they did not act upon and did that which they were no commanded to do. So he who makes jihaad (striving in the way of Allaah) against them with his hand is a believer and the one who makes jiḥaad against them with his tongue is a believer and one who makes jihaad against them with his heart is a believer, buy beyond that there is not even a mustard seed of imaan.*" (Saheeh - narrated by Muslim)

Shaikh-ul-Islaam Ibn Taimiyyah says in As-Siyaasat-ush-Shar'eeyah, "*And some of the companions of ash-Shaafi'ee and Ahmad and others have declared it to be permissible to kill the one who calls to innovations which go against the Book and the Sunnah - and likewise many of the companions of Maalik. And they say: 'Verily Maalik and others allowed the killing of the Qadiriyyah because of the corruption they spread in the land not because of their turning back from the religion.'* "

INNOVATIONS ARE THE WAY OF THE ACCURSED JEW AND THE STRAYING CHRISTIANS

Both the Qur'aan and the Ahadeeth make it abundantly plain that innovating in the matters of the Deen is the way of the People of the Book who split into so many sects and subsects as a result of selfish contumacy and mutual rivalry even though they had the clear truth. They continually backslided and harboured dissatisfaction with what Allaah revealed for them and invented new ways to worship Him as well as incorporated pagan traditions and customs into their respective creed and practices. All this can be readily gleaned from the myriads of history and theological books found on the development and philosophy of Judaism and Christianity. Regrettably the situation with the Muslims is almost no better than that of the People of the Book. Unfortunately so much from Jaahiliyyah and polytheistic cultures have seeped into the popular application and beliefs of Islaam that one would indeed be very hard pressed to find a community where the Sunnah shorn of all innovations is adhered to as a custom. Not only does Allaah obligate the Muslims to differ from the unbelievers, but at the same time He has mercifully showed us what is wrong with the People of the Book and the pagans so we may avoid being like them and escape the pitfalls they fell into, but what can we say of the Muslims who would rather they fell in those traps and became close to the rejecters of Allaah and Islaam? Allaah azzawajal admonishes the jews on account of not being satisfied with that which was revealed to them, but rather they wished to substitute their own forms of worship and piety. And the case is similar for

the Christians: "*Ask the Children of Israa'eel how many clear signs We have sent them. But if anyone, after Allaah's Favour has come to him, substitutes (something else) then Allaah is strict in punishment.*" (soorah Al-Baqarah 2:211)

Allaah also says: "*Say: O People of the Book exceed not the bounds in your religion, trespassing beyond the Truth. Nor follow the vain desires of people who went astray in times gone by, who mislead many and strayed from the even way. Curses were pronounced on those among the Children of Israa'eel who were kaafirs, by the tongue of David and of Jesus son of Mary: because they disobeyed and persisted in excesses.*" (soorah - Al-Maa'idah 5: 77-78)

That innovations are excesses in the religion goes without saying. They come from the vain desires of the people to do more or better than the Messenger (ﷺ) and his Companions and since they are not from the knowledge or prescription of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah innovations are justified only by trespassing beyond the truth. As the above aayah establishes, disobedience to the revelation and persisting in excesses is an accursed thing to do and a Muslim would do well to reflect on the above aayah before becoming defensive about any innovation no matter how small.

THE PERSISTENCE OF INNOVATIONS

One of the major reasons for the unshakeable continuance of bid'ah is the strong inclination of the people to blindly following the ways of the forefathers, which Allaah has clearly indicated in the Qur'aan: "*When it is said to them, 'Follow what Allaah has revealed', they say, 'No! We shall follow the way of our fathers.' What! Even though their fathers were void of wisdom and guidance?*" (soorah Al-Baqarah 2: 170) So long as the tendency remains among the Muslims in taking pride in one's ancestry or tribal heritage, pride in one's culture and nationalism, the fight against innovations and ignorant ways is going to be a long-drawn conflict. The call to Allaah and to His Messenger (ﷺ) will go pretty much unheeded in preference to sticking to what has been inherited from tradition and custom in the family etc., no matter what has been acquired is based on knowledge that it is correct or not. "*When it is said to them, 'Come to what Allaah has revealed, come to the Messenger', they say, 'Enough for us are the ways we found our fathers following.' What! Even though their fathers were void of knowledge and guidance?*" (soorah Al-Maa'idah 5: 107)

We have to tackle this unwarranted disposition of the people towards maintaining rites and structures in the popular Islaam of the people if we are going to be dealing with the problems of innovations in the Ummah. At the same time we have to understand that innovations are going to be allowed to continue because they have a lot to lose by the people turning away from misguidance. The end result for him who turns away from guidance and

adheres to what has been adopted through history is nothing other than the rejection of Islaam itself. Both of these two facts have been alluded to in the Qur'aan. "*Just in the same way, whenever We sent a warner before you to any people, the wealthy ones among them said, 'We found our fathers following a certain religion and we will certainly follow in their footsteps.' He said, 'What! Even if I brought you better guidance than that which you found your fathers following?' They said, 'For us, we deny that you (Prophets) are sent (on a mission at all).'* " (soorah Al-Zukhroof 43: 23) and other aayat in the Qur'aan of similar meanings.

Innovations are not from the Qur'aan or the Sunnah and it will be a cause of great regret on the Day of Judgement. Allaah says: "*The Day that their faces will be turned upside down by the Fire, they will say, 'Woe to us! Would that we had obeyed Allaah and obeyed His Messenger.'* " (soorah Al-Ahzaab 33: 36)

ADVICE AND CONCLUSIONS

Innovations are a challenge to the Deen as given by Allaah to His Messenger (ﷺ) in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. It is a most subtle way to corrupt the religion from within whereby the perpetrators are made to feel justified in their innovatory actions. It is the perfect tool of the Shaitaan which eats into the very essence of imaan (faith). Ash-Shaatibee has defined bid'ah as "*a newly invented way in the religion in imitation of/corresponding to the Sharee'ah, by which nearness to Allaah is sought, not being supported by any authentic proof, neither the action itself nor the way it is performed.*" Hence the more innovations are found among the adherents of Islaam, the more they become people of a Deen other than that of Muhammad (ﷺ).

Although innovations are rampant and the vast majority of the so-called religious experts and the 'maulanas' and 'maulavis' accommodate them either for the sake of keeping the people happy or because they themselves are active supporters of them, being misguided and ignorant, the Muslim whose heart throbs with the faith in Allaah and fears His punishment, brings a level of conviction in the adequacy of the Faith as contained in the two blessed sources which does not allow him to seek any means other than what has been shown by His Messenger (ﷺ). Such a Muslim has full satisfaction in the Sunnah because that is what brings a man out of the depths of darkness into enlightenment and such a man has full confidence in the correctness and desirability of the Sunnah as opposed to the evil innovations. Allaah says about most of the people

on earth: "*If you were to follow most of them on the earth they will lead you away from the way of Allaah. They follow nothing but conjecture, they do nothing but lie!*" (soorah Al-An'aam 6: 116) Thus one must not allow oneself to be swayed by the sheer magnitude of the number of people who make little of innovations and who dabble in them thinking they are doing a great job in Islaam.

A Muslim must recognise the great favour that Allaah has done to humanity by sending us the best of mankind Muhammad (ﷺ) as His last messenger, and not seek any crookedness in revelation. Innovations are a way of showing displeasure and discontentment at what has been bestowed upon mankind in the Qur'aan and the way of the Messenger (ﷺ) and one must understand that all innovations in the Deen, no matter how they are justified and how they are implemented are evil. This we have seen before in the Ahadeeth reported in the Saheeh of Muslim and by at-Tirmidhee quoted in the chapter "All Innovation in the Deen Strictly Forbidden". Allaah says: "*But few of my Servants are thankful.*" (soorah As-Sabaa 34: 13) Thus one must remember that to show true gratitude and thankfulness to Allaah one must do so in the way of the Messenger (ﷺ) only and not become influenced by the majority since they are ungrateful and the proof of that is in their disbelief, disobedience and innovations. Imaam Maalik said: "*Nothing will benefit the Ummah to come except that which benefited the early Ummah.*" (Ibn Taymiyyah in Qaa'idah Jaleelah wa Tawwasul wal-Waseelah)

The problem is not that people at large do not believe in the existence of Allaah or that He is the supreme deity, but in that the people do not worship Allaah except by associating partners with Him. This is clear from many aayat in the Qur'aan and a Muslim would do well to remember what Allaah says of the majority who do believe in Him: "*And most of them do not believe in Allaah except that they are mushriks.*" (soorah Al-Yoosuf 12:106) Thus shirk is found among the Muslims and one is on very questionable grounds when he leaves the safe and prescribed way of the Sunnah and delve into innovating and innovations.

When knowledge is the privilege of the few and ignorance is widespread and temptations abound amidst a cruel competing world, innovations find fertile ground to flourish, both as a source of worldly benefit for the evil initiators and accommodators but also for the well-meaning unknowing devotee who seeks to be blessed by Allaah and honour Islaam's great servants, but who are used by the first set of people to rob them of their time and wealth. The Islaam portrayed by the Messenger (ﷺ) and his sincere pious followers the Companions, becomes a strange way, and the one who calls to the Sunnah is castigated and frowned upon as at best a troublemaker and at worst outside the fold of Islaam altogether. Such is the topsy-turvy state of affairs now-a-days, but we take comfort from the words of our beloved Messenger (ﷺ) who said: "*Islaam began as a stranger and shall return as a stranger. So give glad tidings to the strangers.*" (Saheeh - narrated by Muslim) and in another narration: "*So give*

glad tidings to the strangers, those who put right what the people have corrupted of my Sunnah." (Saheeh - narrated by at-Tirmidhee)

In a world of desires and passions where the clear truth becomes clouded by the whims and fancies of men, one needs to develop and maintain faith in the revealed way so that one cannot be deceived into believing that everyone and everything is O.K. simply because they all parade in front of our eyes raising 'Islamic' slogans and hold aloft the banner of the call to Unity. Abdullaah Ibn Mas'ood said: "*The Jamaa'ah is what is the Truth. Even if it is only one person.*" One must know what is the way of the final Messenger (ﷺ) and seek unity, brotherhood, and peace on that basis and never give in to the popular demands of narrow-mindedness whose focus of attention hardly ever wavers beyond this life. If it ever happens that there is only one man in the whole of the Ummah who is on the path of the Messenger (ﷺ) and his Companions, then he is the one with whom unity is to be sought and he is the Jamaa'ah. The man with the truth must not fear the straying ignorant self-seekers, rather he ought to revive the Sunnah wherever and whenever he can. Al-Fudayl ibn Ayyaad said: "*Follow the ways of guidance and you will not be harmed by the small amount of people on that way (saalikeen). And beware of the ways of misguidance (dalaalah) and do not be deceived by the large number of those who go to destruction.*"

The Salaf of the past would not even want to hear the talk of the innovators let alone sit with them to learn anything of the Deen from them. They took great caution not to be

affected by their discourse and took pains not to allow their hearts to be impressed by anything coming from a grafting on to the Deen. Al-Hasan and Ibn Seereen said, "*Do not sit with the people of innovation, do not debate with them and do not listen to them.*" (Sunan-ud-Daarimee : 1/110) The Salaf used to consider the words of the Jews and Christians safer than the words of the innovators, because in the former case their falsehood is evident and less likely to cause us to stray, but in the latter case it is more difficult to sift the truth from falsehood and more prone to attract us to vanity and that which pernicious. Ibn al-Mubaarak said, "*Indeed we relate the words of the Jews and the Christians but we are not able to relate the words of the Jahmiyaah.*" (Siyar A'laam an-Nubalaa of adh-Dhahabee 8: 355) The Jahmiyaah were a group of people who denied the attributes of Allaah using logic and argumentation because they thought that would make Allaah similar to man! Asmaa ibn Ubaid said, "*'Two men of the people of vain desires (innovators) entered upon Ibn Seereen and said, ' O Aboo Bakr, may we speak to you?' He said, 'No!' They said, 'May we recite to you an aayah from the Book of Allaah?' He said, "No! Indeed you will either get up and leave me or I will get up and leave.' So they went out and some of the people said, 'O Aboo Bakr! What harm would it have done for you for them to read an aayah from the Book of Allaah?' He said, 'I feared that they would read an aayah to me and change it and that would remain in my heart.'* " (Sunan-ud-Daarimee : 1/109) The advice is as Al-Hasan said, "*Do not sit along with an innovator so that he throws into your heart something that you might go along with and thus be destroyed, or you disagree with him and your heart becomes ill.*" Indeed it is to our own

advantage that we tread the path of the Salaf which is the path that leads to Paradise.

In fact not only is it our concern that we do not allow the innovator or their innovations have any hold in society but as the Salaf used to say, it is for the Muslims to expose them and uproot their roots from the society so that their rotting touch may not reach the hearts of the people. Ibn us-Salah said, "*It is permissible to talk about the innovator behind his back - rather to mention his condition at any time, whether he is absent or present so long as the intention is to warn the people of his condition. The pious forefathers (Salaf-us-Saaliheen) were upon this - or those of them who did that. It is permissible to speak of that even if not asked a question or for another case, and the case is the same for the reporter of Hadeeths and the writer - that which would make him unreliable - such as lying etc. (is to be made known), since some of the scholars used to make Tawaaf around the Ka'bah while saying, 'So and so is unreliable', 'so and so is a liar', and they used to regard that as a means of nearness to Allaah, and likewise speaking of the Faasiq (sinner) is permissible in order to warn those who are ignorant of his condition whether he is one openly or secretly.*" (Fataawa Ibn us-Salah 2/497)

SUMMARY

(a) The Ahl ul-Bid'ah have been warned by Fire: "*Every bid'ah is dalaalah and every dalaalah is in the Fire.*" (Saheeh - narrated by al-Tirmidhee)

(b) Their actions will be rejected by Allaah and His Messenger (ﷺ): "*Whoever does an action that we have not commanded then that action shall be rejected.*" (Saheeh - narrated by Muslim)

(c) Tawbah (repentance) shall not be accepted from them: "*Verily Allaah does not accept the tawbah of the Saahib ul-Bid'ah (one who commits innovations), until he stops the bid'ah.*" (Saheeh - narrated by at-Tabaraanee and al-Maqdesee in al-Mukhtaarah)

(d) Shifaa (intercession by the Messenger (ﷺ) on the Day of Judgement) will not accepted of the one who commits bid'ah: "*Verily I shall proceed you to the Fountain (of Al-Kawthar). Whoso will pass by me shall drink and whoso will drink will never get thirsty. People whom I will know and who will know me will certainly come to me for drink but there will be a barrier between them and me. Then I shall say: 'Verily they are of me.' It will be said: 'You certainly do not know what bid'ah they made after you.' Then I shall say: 'Be off those who made bid'ah after me.'*" (saheeh - narrated by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

(e) They will not be considered a part of the Ummaah: "*Whosoever turns away from my Sunnah is not of me.*" (saheeh - narrated by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Al-Hasan al-Basri said, "*The people claimed that they loved Allaah the Glorious and Exalted, so they tested them with this aayah, "Say: If you do love Allaah, follow me: Allaah will love you and forgive you your sins: for Allaah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.*" (Soorah Aal-i-Imraan 3: 31) The truth of one's claim to Islaam lies in the adherence to the Sunnah and its opposite is proved by the practice of innovations.



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